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CURRENT SUPPORT MEMORANDUM

CHINESE PRODUCTION OF BASIC CONSTRUCTION
MATERIALS IN 1957-58

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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CHINESE PRODUCTION OF BASIC CONSTRUCTION
MATERIALS IN 1957-58

Recent Peiping announcements indicate that the construction materials industry in 1957 achieved goals more than triple the best pre-1945 production. In 1958 Communist China plans to produce as much cement as did the USSR in 1948 1/ and as many bricks as did the USSR in 1952. The 1958 planned production of construction materials appears to be within the capability of the Chinese Communist construction materials industry.

1957 Actual and 1958 Planned Production of Selected
Construction Materials in Communist China. 3/

| | 1957 | | 1958 | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| | Quantity | Percent of USSR | Quantity | Percent of USSR |
| Cement (Million tons) | 6.7 | 24 | 7.6 | 22 |
| Brick (Billion Units) | 14.0 | 58 | 14.0 | 52 |
| Roof tile (Billion Units) | 2.7 | 471 | 2.7 | 433 |
| Flat Glass (Million m ²) | 46.1 | 38 | 47.9 | 37 |
| Timber* (Million m ³) | 26.6 | 6 | 29.1 | N.A. |

By 1957 cement production in Communist China had increased to a level four times the 1942 production of 1.9 million tons 4/, the highest annual production of the pre-1949 period. Brick is a very important construction material in China, and the Chinese Communists have stated that most new housing units are constructed of this material. The Chinese estimate that the 1957 brick production is sufficient for 56 million square meters of floor space. 5/ It is reasonable to expect brick production to increase as housing and other construction increases.

The large quantity of ceramic roof tiles produced and the absence of information on an alternative roofing material indicate that tile remains the basic roofing material used in China. The 2.7 billion roof tiles produced in 1957 are estimated by the Chinese to be sufficient for 68 million square meters of roofing. 6/ This is probably indicative of the approximate area of roofing to be constructed or rebuilt in 1957.

The Peiping announcements indicate that production of flat glass has increased more than 2.5 times since 1951, when 18 million square meters were produced. 7/ Lastly, timber production in China, which, though small in comparison to Soviet production, has increased to about 2.5 times the 1952 production of 9.5 million cubic meters. 8/

*A large, but unknown, proportion of the cut timber is sawn into lumber for construction purposes.

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